

Public Policy Committee
Montgomery County Commission on Aging

Notes of the meeting
October 14, 2010

Attendees: Bob Tiller, Jack Sprague, Leslie Marks, John Honig, Sarah Gotbaum, Nguyen Minh Chau, Odile Saddi, Matt Kelleher

1. Legislative Breakfast

The legislative breakfast is scheduled for Friday, December 3, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. at the Holiday Park Senior Center. The schedule includes informal discussion from 8:00 to 8:30, with more formal program from 8:30 to 10:00. All commission members are urged to attend.

Odile, with volunteer assistance, will collect the legislators' RSVPs and make name tags. Leslie and Jack will be responsible for providing food and coffee.

We want to have a handout packet for the legislators, which will include: a two-pager on the commission's legislative priorities, our most recent Annual Report, and a list of Commission members and officers. A proposal to include our recent Call to Action, which was directed to county officials, was left undecided. Bob will ask each executive committee member to submit no later than November 8 their committee's recommended legislative matters for inclusion on the priorities list; they will then be combined into one document by the executive committee.

We also want to provide an informal set of "talking points" for commission members to use, as well as an outline short speech for Elaine to make. Those materials should closely parallel the priorities document that we give to legislators.

Odile will send to all COA members the information and instructions which were sent prior to last year's breakfast, as well as this year's "talking points."

Leslie suggested inviting the members of the Vital Living Committee to the breakfast, but others opposed that proposal. Bob decided that we will leave it to Elaine to decide.

Jack distributed a draft of two invitation letters for newly elected and continuing legislators, which he will give to Elaine. A list of the newly elected legislators will be provided by Jack after election day. Elaine's final invitation letters should be sent promptly after election day, both by hard copy and e-mail, with a map enclosed.

2. Purpose-built affordable senior housing

Leslie had previously provided a draft of a proposed policy to be supported by the commission and urged on the county government. She stressed that first such a policy should be adopted by the county, and then it could then be implemented. It is intended to apply to new construction of independent living apartments. John raised the issue that there are no legal standards for design of purpose-built housing. Leslie indicated that there are standards used by Victory Housing and

others. Matt mentioned a “Design for Lifetime” by the Department of Permitting Services. Sarah suggested the need for extending the policy to modify existing buildings for purpose-built affordable housing for seniors. Chau asked about sources of funding for the staff person mentioned in the proposal, and Leslie replied that there are various sources of funding that developers can tap.

Bob summarized the committee’s lengthy discussion: we find Leslie’s proposal valuable and want to support it; but we can not do so without the approval of the commission’s Aging in Place and in the Community Committee. Bob will contact the co-chairs to seek their approval and be sure that it fits into their priorities.

3. State Legislation on Financial Exploitation of Seniors

John met with Assistant State’s Attorney Robert Hill, who explained that the Kramer Bill, which is now law, defines “elderly and vulnerable persons” for purposes of prosecuting financial crimes. The victim must be 68 years or older, and the state’s attorney must show that deception, intimidation or undue influence were used to obtain assets. This is compared to previously when two certificates of incompetence were required, which were hard to obtain.

Senator Raskin’s Bill, SB783, which did not get through the Judicial Proceedings Committee, was concerned with timely seizure and forfeiture procedures in connection with certain crimes. Mr. Hill suggested we find out why it did not pass the committee and what might be fixed, so a new bill might pass. Jack discussed the difficulty of passing it in the House of Delegates, where the committee chair is not inclined to support it. Jack agreed to talk to Senator Frosh, chair of the committee, about moving it in the senate, and Bob will touch base with Senator Raskin.

4. State Legislation on Aging in the Community

The commission has approved the proposed legislation that arose from the summer study relating to aging in the community, and it is now one of our priorities. Jack said it will be put into the proper format and language before introduction. He will work with the Secretary of Aging and ask her if she will sponsor the bill. Jack also mentioned that there is an Aging in Place Meeting in Annapolis on Monday, October 18.

5. End-of-Life legislation

A commission summer study suggested legislation is necessary, and that was approved by the commission. The Health and Wellness Committee has asked this committee for help, and Jack agreed to work with them.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Bob will be out of town for most of November, so Jack will chair the next meeting. We expect Elaine to move the executive committee meeting to our usual meeting day of the second Thursday of November. So this committee will meet on November 10, at a location TBA.